

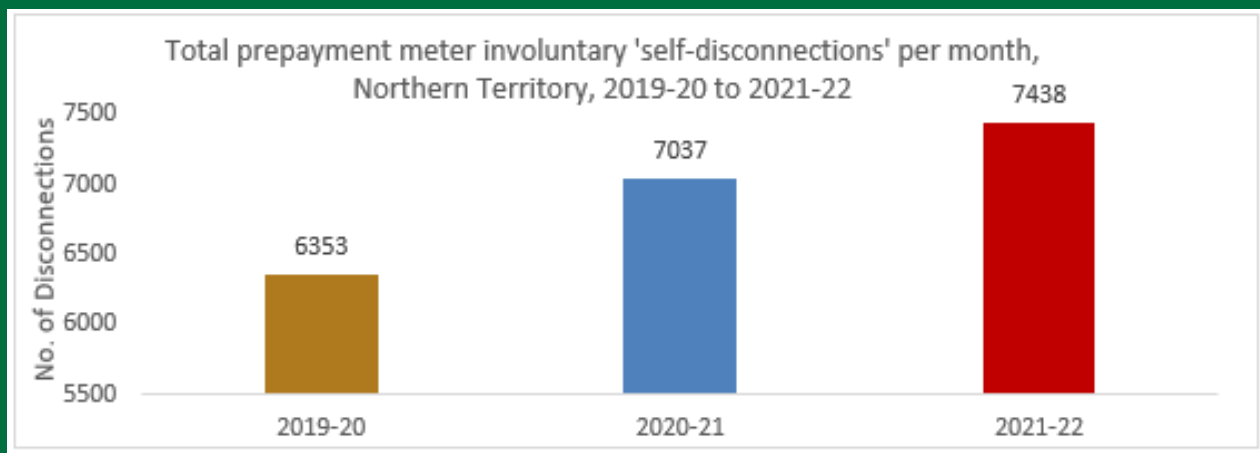
# FACT SHEET

## Cost of Utilities in the NT April 2023



No surprises: electricity costs continue to be unaffordable for many NT households

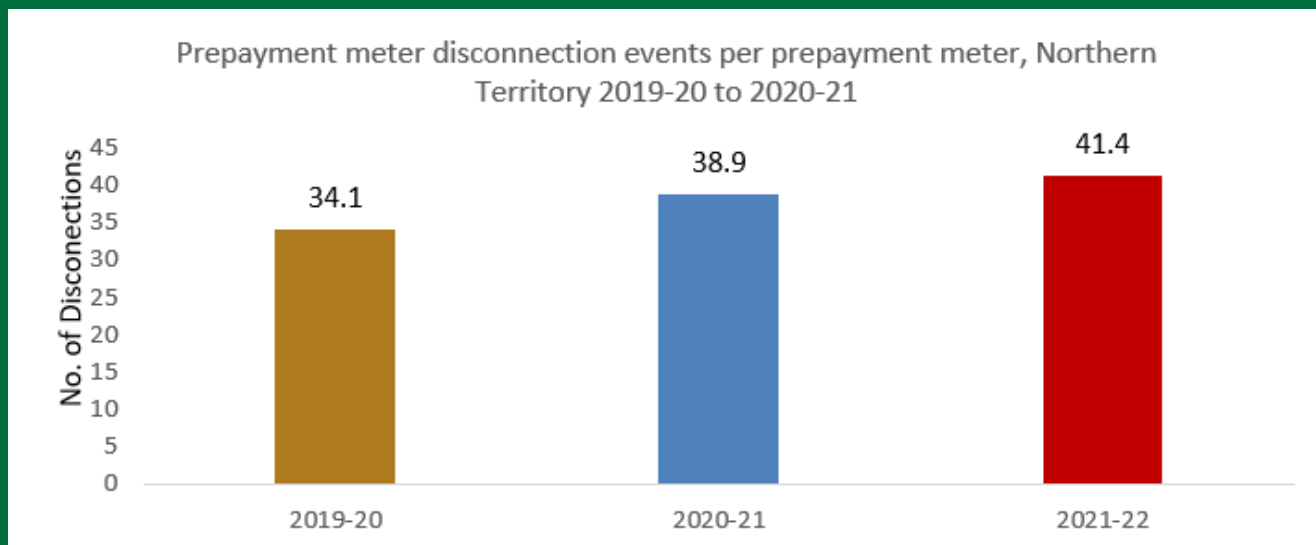
Households with prepayment electricity meters are struggling the most with involuntary 'self disconnections' continuing to rise



Involuntary 'self-disconnections' per household increased across the NT, with incidents of involuntary 'self-disconnections' up 6.4% between 2020/21 and 2021/22, and up 21.4% for the previous two years of data. There was a slight reduction in the duration of involuntary 'self-disconnections' by 19.1% since 2020-21, from 6 hours 48 minutes to 6 hours 20 minutes.



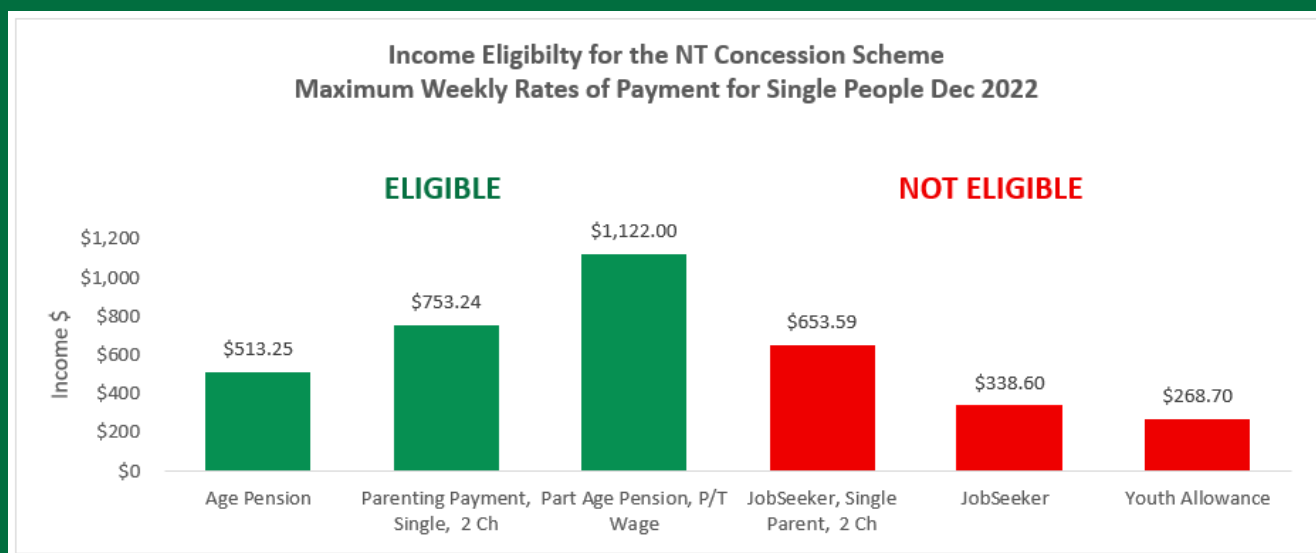
*Jacana Energy advises that the average duration figure may not represent the experience of prepayment customers, as the figures include people who may not top up their meter while away from home for extended periods. However, as this is the case for both time periods, the change shown between periods would be a reasonable indicator of the change from 2019/20 - 2021/22*



The above two graphs do not include July 2019 as data was unavailable. Therefore, 2019-20 data is averaged over 11 months

Note: while Jacana Energy uses the term 'self-disconnections', NTCOSS uses "involuntary 'self-disconnection'" to emphasise that households generally do not voluntarily stop their electricity supply. Most households in remote Aboriginal communities and some urban public housing, comprising the NT's most disadvantaged residents, use prepaid meters for electricity, which are disconnected when not topped up.

High electricity costs have a disproportionate impact on Low Income Households. Due to the NT Government's Concession Scheme eligibility criteria, many lower income households in the NT, including those on JobSeeker and Youth Allowance, miss out on concessions



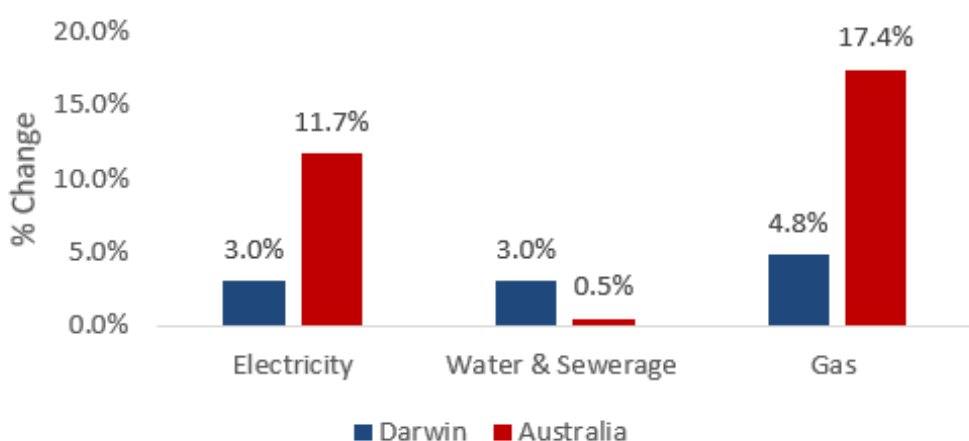
Energy hardship for low income households could be significantly reduced by better targeted concessions, improved energy efficiency, and access to solar energy

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## Cost of Utilities in the NT April 2023



Percentage Change in Utilities CPI Darwin vs Australia  
Dec 2021 to Dec 2022



CPI for Gas and other household fuels was the highest for utilities at 4.8%, though the NT has avoided the much larger price spikes experienced across the country (up 17.4% nationally over the past year)

CPI for Electricity rose 3% over the past year due to the 3% increase in the September quarter - the largest single quarterly rise since March 2015. The NT managed to avoid the larger electricity price spikes experienced across the country (up 11% nationally over the past year). However, average electricity bills are among some of the highest in the country (2020/21 figures), which is influenced by factors such as our climate and poor thermal efficiency housing.

CPI for Water for Darwin rose 3% over the past year, due to the 3% rise in the September quarter, also the largest single quarterly rise since March 2015. It rose much higher than the national rise of 0.5%  
Average water bills are among some of the highest in the country (2020/21 figures for Darwin vs capital cities), which is influenced by factors such as climate.

Darwin CPI figures for Electricity, Water and Sewage are representative of the whole of the NT, given the same prices apply across the NT.

Any price change, even a 3% increase, for an essential service like electricity, water or gas for low income households will bite hard in the household budget

### NTCOSS recommends that the NT Government:

As a matter of urgency, ensure that a range of payment options, including Centrepay, are available for households with pre-payment meters to purchase pre-paid electricity

Provide protections for pre-payment meter customers that are suitable for the Territory's circumstances (as recommended by the NT Utilities Commission)

Require retailers with prepayment meter customers to develop, implement and comply with a Utilities Commission-approved customer hardship policy for their prepayment meter customers that meets minimum requirements specified in the Electricity Retail Supply Code

Expand the NT Concession scheme to extend concessions for electricity to all Centrelink Commonwealth Health Care Card holders

Plan and implement a program to install (or provide access to) solar power on all social housing

Adopt the National Construction Code 2022 requiring new homes to achieve the 7-Star Energy Efficiency standard already agreed to by most Australian jurisdictions

Improve thermal performance of existing dwellings and introduce mandatory minimum energy standards for all rental housing

Increase investment in planned and scheduled maintenance for social housing

NTCOSS recommends that the Federal Government increases JobSeeker to at least \$76 a day to cover basic living costs

References: [Australian Bureau of Statistics 2023](#); [Australian Energy Market 2018](#); [Health Habitat 2022](#); [Northern Territory Government 2023](#); [Services Australia 2022](#); [Team Poly Water Solutions for Life 2023](#); [NT Utilities Commission 2021 \(2019/20 Figures\)](#); [NT Utilities Commission 2022 \(2020/21 Figures\)](#); [NT Utilities Commission 2023 \(2021/22 Figures\)](#)